

The Daily News

*A daily communications vehicle for all staff members
of Washington State's Health Care Authority*

Washington State
Health Care Authority



Posted 11.04.2013: HCA visit to Port Gamble S'Klallam

Last week six HCA staff members accepted an invitation to visit the Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribal headquarters to meet the tribe's health clinic staff. Ed Fox, Health Services director, shown in the photo, led the meeting with about 60 people, including his health and human services staff and



representatives from several other tribes. HCA representatives included Karol Dixon and Mike Longnecker, Tribal Affairs; and members of the newly formed Tribal Affairs Committee: Sheryl Hermanson, Medical Assistance Customer Service Center; and Beth Luce, Communications; as well as Jason Bergman, Provider Relations; and Tyron Nixon, Medical Administrative Claims.

“Everyone was impressed with the depth and breadth of services the Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe provides tribal citizens,”

Karol says. “Health services is just one part of the essential government services provided. PGST is doing some great work and has long been one of the nation's most innovative Tribes — particularly in health and Indian child welfare issues.”



Over a generous lunch of salmon and clams provided by the Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe in their beautiful longhouse, Ed led a discussion about the new health care reform law and how it applies to Native Americans.

“PGST has three tribal assisters, and they have had success in enrolling both current and newly eligible individuals in Medicaid,” Karol says. “The Tribal Sponsorship program is scheduled to begin on November 7, and

PGST expects to sponsor approximately 50 tribal citizens with bronze plans. While acknowledging some hiccups with the process thus far, they are overwhelming optimistic. To paraphrase Ed Fox, in a few months this phase of healthcare reform will be in their rearview mirror, everyone will be covered, and they will be moving on.”

Look for more from Tribal Affairs in coming months about the particular challenges involved in bringing Medicaid Expansion to Washington Native Americans.